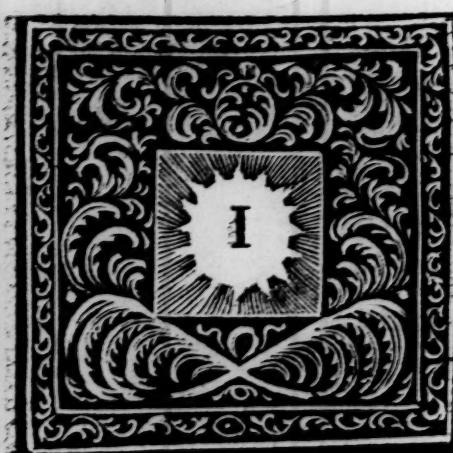


# An ANSWER to a Paper of Reflexions on the Project for laying a Duty on English Wrought Silks. K



It is an undoubted Maxim, and constantly verify'd by Experience, That the Value of the Lands of *England* varys as Trade either flourishes or decays.

Two of the most considerable Manufactures of this Kingdom are those of Wool and Silk, between which there is such a Connexion, that to discourage one, is to depress the other; and all the Estates of the Nobility and Gentry of *England* will be affected thereby.

The Government, sensible hereof, hath from time to time endeavour'd to encourage and preserve both, by prohibiting the Exportation of Wool and Fullers-Earth, and providing Convoy in time of War, to secure Merchants Ships in their passing and repassing from *Italy* and *Turky*, the chiefest Markets for Cloth, Serges, and other Stuffs.

The greatest Returns for those Woollen Goods are raw and thrown Silk, in Manufacturing of which, many thousand Families are constantly employ'd; for whose Encouragement the Government hath prohibited *East-India* and *French*, and mulcted other foreign wrought Silks; which hath so improv'd our own Manufactures, that the greatest Personages are now furnish'd suitable to their various Fancies with *English*, in lieu of *French*, *Dutch*, and *Italian* Silks.

The Manufacture of which hath been gained to this Kingdom within this fourscore Years, by which this Nation hath saved upwards of 500000 *l.* a Year, and is still capable of a much greater Improvement, if the clandestine Importation of foreign wrought Silks, for which no Custom is paid, be stopp'd (as it will effectually be) by the Method intended for raising the Duty proposed upon all Wrought Silks.

Finding to the great Prejudice of the Manufactury, the Wrought Silks imported in each Year, according to a reasonable Computation, do amount to 300000 *l.* in Value; the Duty whereof, according to the present Rates, will come to about 70000 *l. per Ann.* of which Duty for five Years last past (computing one Year with another) there hath not been paid into the Custom-House more than 10000 *l. per Ann.* as will appear by their Books: So that, according to this Computation, it doth plainly appear Her Majesty hath been defrauded in Her Customs of 60000 *l. per Ann.* or thereabouts; therefore it may reasonably be supposed, that the Opposition made to the Methods now offered, to prevent such clandestine Practices, doth proceed from some Persons, who, for By-Ends, are unwilling to have that clandestine Trade prevented.

In case the Additional Duty to be laid upon all Wrought Silks imported, together with the Method taken for securing the same, should lessen the Importation thereof, there will be the greater Quantity of raw and thrown Silk imported, for which not only Custom will be paid, but our Woollen Manufactures will be barter'd away for the same, which will be the greater Consumption of our Woollen Manufactures, and employ great Numbers of the Poor; and the low Duty laid on the Silks which is manufactured at Home, will enable the Trader to sell his Commodity Three Pence in the Shilling cheaper than the Importer, by which Means those Silks will be all manufactured at Home, which used to be imported, and thereby employ great Numbers of our own Subjects, which are now in great Poverty.

But suppose, for Arguments sake, there should be but 150000 *l.* of Foreign wrought Silks imported, which is but one Half of what is really imported in every Year, the Duty of the said 150000 *l.* secured to Her Majesty, will then amount to 35000 *l.* a Year, or upwards, besides the additional Duty now intended to be laid upon all wrought Silks; and the Manufactures of *Great-Britain* will have 150000 *l.* worth of Goods more to manufacture, than they had before, which 150000 *l.* worth of Goods will use in the making, 57692 Pound weight, and upwards, of dyed Silk, the Duty whereof will encrease Her Majesty's Customs 13700 *l. per Annum*, and upwards.

This 57692 Pound weight of raw and thrown Silk, which will be imported more than was before in each Year, will be very beneficial in employing a great many more Poor than were formerly employed, when the wrought Silk above-mentioned was imported.

The Merchants trading to the *Levant* will find a greater Consumption of raw and thrown Silk, which will be a great Encouragement and Increase, as well as a Securing of that Trade, and will also occasion a greater Consumption of our Cloths and Serges, and other Woollen Manufactures, which are bartered away in Exchange for the said Silk.

The Throwsters, by reason of this extraordinary Importation of raw Silk, will employ several hundred Persons more than they did before, as Winders, Doublers, and others belonging to the throwing Trade, who for the greatest part are poor Seamen and Soldiers Wives, which by this Increase of Work will find a comfortable Subsistence for themselves and Families, and thereby take off a Burthen that now lies upon several Parishes, which are at a great Charge for their Support. The Dyers will also share in this Advantage, their Trade increasing in Proportion to the Weavers.

Great Advantages will be reap'd by the Weavers, because there will be employed, at least, five hundred more Weavers, besides some thousands of Winders, Warpers, Reed-makers, Harness-makers, Draw-boys, Quill-boys, Loom-makers, and several others depending on the same Trade, who will not only get a better Subsistence than before, but will have constant Employment; whereas now they have not above three entire Months Employment in the whole Year.

The Methods intended for securing the Customs to be paid for all Foreign Wrought Silks imported, will make those who deal in Goods (for which Custom hath not been paid) lie under so great Difficulties, that they will be very much expos'd, and always liable to have such Goods seized, besides their being subject to a Penalty: Whereas, at this time, when such Goods are brought ashore, and lodged in the Trader's Shop, it cannot be distinguish'd whether the Custom is paid or not.

The Manner of laying this Duty will neither prove troublesome nor detrimental to the Traders Goods, as is objected, by reason the greatest Part of the Goods will be rated according to Weight, and sealed without opening them at all; and for the rest, they will be but once opened; for after the Stock in Hand is rated, it will ever afterwards be measured and weighed in the Weavers Custody.

The Duty now proposed to be laid cannot affect our Exportation to Foreign Markets, because there will be a Draw-back of the whole new Duty upon Exportation, of such Goods as are manufactured at Home.

As to the Objection, That the Lot of every Trader, or Dealer in the Silks manufactured, will be Trouble and Perplexity, by reason of the Officers searching for imported Goods, for which no Customs have been paid: That is no Objection, because a Custom-House Officer, by the Laws now in being, may search any Traders, or private House, for such Goods, if there be any Information given that any such Goods are there. And there is no Reason to imagine, that the Officers employed in this Duty will be allowed to be more troublesome in searching, than the Officers of the Custom-House are.

As to the Objection of the Seal being torn off, or lost by Accident, after the Duty is paid, and their Goods may thereby be liable to Confiscation: This Inconveniency may be easily provided against, by new sealing them, in case they can upon Oath make it appear the Duty has been paid, and the Seal lost, or torn off by Accident.

Nothing can more discourage the Smuggling Trade, than good Laws to prevent it, and due Care in the Execution of them, which it is hoped the projected Methods will effectually do.

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